

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE  
REHABILITATION COUNCIL  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
AUDIO CONFERENCE - STATEWIDE  
POLYCOM  
January 15, 2020**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Jodi Webb, Trevor Vannett, Bruce Klootwyk, Jason Sutheimer, Robyn Throlson, Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon, Cathy Quintane, Gillian Plenty Chief, Terry Peterson, Bruce Murry, Matt McCleary, Joseph Hall, Shannon Cook

**Members Absent:** Russ Cusack, Gerry Teevens, Marshall Longie, Teresa Larsen, Uma Hoffman

**Others Present: Cynthia Goulet**

Joe Hall called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

**Action: A motion was made by Gillian Plenty Chief and seconded by Trevor Vannett to accept the agenda. Motion carried.**

**Approval of October 22 & 23, 2019 Minutes**

**Action: A motion was made by Bruce Murry and seconded by Bruce Klootwyk to accept the October 23 & 24, 2019 SRC minutes. Motion carried.**

**VR Director Update – Robyn Throlson**

The VR Unified State Plan is nearing completion. VR is collaborating with the DHS Division of Behavioral Health on an “Individual Placement and Supports” (IPS) model for supported employment which focuses on people with psychiatric disabilities and substance use disorders. The state currently has eight community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) trained to provide customized employment (CE). Training on CE continues for both CRPs and VR staff. Robyn reported on the budget:

### Revenue by Grant Year

- FFY 2018

- Federal grant \$10,616,162
- General fund match  
\$2,815,690

- Grant closed December 31, 2019 – expended \$10,474,404 (\$141,758 not drawn down)
- Contributing factors to not drawing down funds
  - Staff turnover – 25% counselor and vision specialist turnover
  - Vacant director position
- FFY 2019
  - Federal grant \$10,868,755 (carried over to FFY 2020)
  - General fund match \$2,873,243
  - Total increase for FFY 2019 = \$310,146
  - Projecting we will expend 100% of federal grant carried over as well as begin spending the current federal grant

## **Vote on Business/Industry/Labor Representative – Joe Hall**

On behalf of the membership committee, Joe Hall brought forth the recommendation to approve the application for Brandy Johnson as a business/industry/labor representative and forward it to the Governor's office for approval.

**Action: A motion was made by the membership committee chair, Joe Hall, and seconded by Jason Sutheimer to accept the business/industry/labor application and forward it to the Governor's office for approval. Motion carried.**

## **Vote on Changes to Bylaws – Joe Hall**

The proposed changes to the bylaws included adding the following new language:

“In order for members to fully participate in SRC business, each member shall participate in at least one SRC orientation/training, facilitated by the liaison of the SRC, in conjunction with the SRC Membership Committee representative. Orientation shall occur prior to a representatives first meeting, or no later than within the first year of their membership.

It was also proposed to change the word “insure” to “ensure.”

**Action: A motion was made by Trevor Vannett and seconded by Jodi Webb to accept the changes to the bylaws with the following additional language:**

**“In order for members to fully participate in SRC business, each member shall participate in at least one SRC orientation/training, facilitated by the liaison of the SRC, in conjunction with the SRC Membership Committee representative. Orientation shall occur prior to a representatives first meeting, or no later than within the first year of their membership.”**

**Also, to revise, a typo on page six, to change “insure” to “ensure.”**

**Motion carried.**

**Region I Update – Aimee Walter,  
Williston Regional Administrator**

In conjunction with Williston High School staff, VR staff are planning an open house in March for the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES Lab) located at Williston High School. The region is coordinating with Adult Education to present on VR services and take applications. They have started to do presentations on VR services to local Social Services units. They continue to work with customized employment (CE) and with Opportunity Foundation on the discovery process. Their VR office facilitates a Job Club to assist clients with building work skills.

## **Region VII Update – Tom Schiwal, Bismarck Regional Administrator**

The Bismarck region serves ten counties around the Bismarck/Mandan area. The Bismarck regional office consists of eight vocational rehabilitation counselors (four are senior VR counselors and four VR counselors are working toward their CRC), two support staff, one vision specialist, one business services specialist (shared with the Dickinson region and traveling three to four times per month), and one career assessment specialist.

Bismarck Public Schools continues to participate in a pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) contract and there is a new contract with Mandan High School. Mandan opened a coffee

shop on the campus which facilitates student work experience opportunities and builds workplace readiness skills.

The region is experiencing an increase in the number of persons with disabilities coming to VR who have been incarcerated. They are in touch with the department of corrections to coordinate referrals.

## **Parking Fee Update – Cheryl Anderson**

Isabel Tischmak, the new program accountant in Fiscal Administration, is going to be working with colleagues in fiscal and legal. The following needs to happen prior to putting parameters in place for how to use the funds:

- Fiscal/Legal will draft a letter and determine who it needs to be distributed to in order to educate the necessary entities on proper remittance procedures, i.e. frequency of payment, proper coding, etc.
- We need budget authority before we can spend the funds.

## **Tax Credit Update – Cheryl Anderson**

A flyer for the Customized Employment Tax Credit was developed and has been distributed to the eight community rehabilitation providers who are authorized to provide customized employment. It outlines the target group to be served, what criteria needs to be met to qualify for the credit, how individuals with disabilities can participate, and the role of the Office of

the State Tax Commissioner in administering the income tax credit. Contact Cheryl Anderson (VR) for more information.

## **Tribal Updates**

There was no one present for tribal updates.

# **Committee Chair Reports**

## **Planning/Evaluation Committee – Robyn Throlson**

The Planning/Evaluation Committee had a special meeting to review the VR Transition and Pre-ETS operational policy. The committee added language regarding the schools being required to give us a copy of their release of information form.

**Action: A motion was made by Trevor Vannett and seconded by Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon to accept the changes in the VR Transition and Pre-ETS operational policy. Motion carried.**

**Membership/Public Relations  
Committee – Joe Hall, Chair**

No report.

**Resource Committee – Jason  
Sutheimer, Chair**

No report.

**Employment Committee – Bruce  
Murry**

No report.

**Public Comment**

**Next meeting**

April 22, 2020

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**A motion was made by Bruce Murry  
and seconded by Gillian Plenty Chief**

**to adjourn the meeting. Meeting**

**a**djourned at 3:00p.m.